

Urge India to reconsider its decision to send a trade delegation to Iran

Washington, D.C.— Today, Reps. Steve Israel (D-Huntington) and Richard Hanna (R-Barneveld) called on India to reconsider its decision to send a trade delegation to Iran to explore economic opportunities. They also expressed concern that India has surpassed China as the top purchaser of Iranian crude oil.

“Iran has made it clear that it has no plans to stop developing nuclear weapons,” said Rep. Israel. “India needs to stand firm with the international coalition. Given the strong partnership between the United States and India, I hope that the concerns that Rep. Hanna and I expressed by are heard and addressed as quickly as possible.”

"Iran continues to develop its nuclear program and display hostility toward its neighbors," Rep. Hanna said. "These actions threaten to destabilize the region and the world. It's important that major democracies in the international community unite to maintain pressure on the regime in Tehran to give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons. I am hopeful that our allies, like India, will not expand business ties with Iran at the very time when meaningful international sanctions are just beginning to take effect."

Reps. Israel and Hanna sent a letter to Ambassador of India to the United States Nirupama Rao. The text follows below:

February 15, 2012

The Honorable Nirupama Rao

Ambassador of India to the United States

2107 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Rao:

We write today to express our serious concern with the announcement that your government will send a large trade delegation to Iran within the next few weeks in order to explore economic opportunities. This announcement comes as the international coalition working to isolate the Iranian regime continues to stand firm in applying pressure through international sanctions aimed at Iran's energy and financial sectors. At a time when global businesses and financial institutions are pulling out of Iran and refusing to conduct business, we hope that your country will join this coalition instead of hindering its progress.

We are also deeply concerned to learn of reports that India has surpassed China as the top purchaser of Iranian crude oil. Financial institutions that continue to facilitate purchases of

petroleum products from Iran could now face possible sanctions according to U.S. law. Our allies around the globe are now searching for non-Iranian sources to meet their energy needs. Given the strong U.S.-India partnership, we hope that your country will follow suit and decrease its reliance on Iranian crude oil.

Even as international sanctions begin to bite, the Iranian regime has shown no sign of abandoning its pursuit of nuclear weapons. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has begun enriching uranium up to 20 percent at its underground facility at Qom, a site which remained undisclosed until 2009. Uranium enriched at this level signifies a critical step toward developing a nuclear weapon in that it represents 80 percent of the work needed. The latest IAEA report, issued at the end of last year, explicitly confirmed that Iran has engaged in “activities related to the development of a nuclear explosive device.” The report also indicated for the first time military dimensions to the Iranian nuclear program, including testing designed to integrate nuclear weapons on specific missile warheads.

We know India shares our goal of ensuring that Iran does not get a nuclear capability and appreciate India’s votes against Iran at the IAEA. We also appreciate that India has ended the sale of refined petroleum to Iran and has not moved forward with the India-Pakistan-Iran pipeline. But now is not the time to neither explore future trade opportunities with Iran nor increase business ties. We respectfully urge your government to reconsider its decision to send a trade delegation to Iran and ask that you stand firm with the international coalition working diligently to pressure the Iranian regime to abandon its dangerous pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Sincerely,

Reps. Israel and Hanna Call on India to Stand Firm against Iran

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

Steve Israel

Richard Hanna

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

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